

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Parenting has been identified as an important factor in influencing adolescent health. The WHO identified parenting intervention as the first strategy to improve adolescent health. Parenting is a multi dimensional phenomenon with cultural diversity. Very few researches have been conducted in Sri Lanka on few aspects of parenting. As the adolescent health problems are high, understand the patterns of parenting and parenting interventions are a timely need.

Objectives

To develop and validate a tool to describe patterns of parenting in selected dimensions, to describe the patterns of parenting and its associated factors among parents of 13 to 15 year old schooling adolescents and to assess the effectiveness of a parenting intervention.

Methodology

The study comprised of three components. They are the development and validation of an instrument to describe the patterns of parenting, a descriptive cross sectional study to describe the patterns of parenting and the associated factors, and a randomised control trial to assess the effectiveness of an intervention on parenting.

In component 1, the Principal Investigator (PI) developed and validated a 27 item, self administered multidimensional tool to describe the patterns of parenting- Parenting Patterns Questionnaire (PPQ). The PPQ was developed by the following steps: item selection, expert consensus and item analysis. The item generation was done using literature review and Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. The reliability of the PPQ was demonstrated by internal consistency and test re - test reliability. The judgemental validity was established by an expert panel comprised psychiatrists, psychologists, community physicians, educationists and sociologists. The PPQ was used after pretesting in Kilinochchi district.

In component 2, a descriptive cross sectional study was carried out among 1863 schooling adolescents aged 13 to 15 years. The sample was recruited by multi stage cluster random sampling probability proportionate to the size. Ninety seven clusters were studied and the response rate was 96.28%. The data was analysed using SPSS 15 and the data was presented as proportions for each pattern of parenting and to represent an overall parenting quality. The association between parenting patterns and the socio, demographic and environmental factors was assessed using chi square test. As it is a descriptive study design and no comparison groups included, a regression analysis was not done to identify the confounding effect between the associated factors. This has to be considered as an important limitation of the study.

In component 3, a Parenting Education Package (PEP) was designed and an intervention was carried out to the parents of 13 -15 year old schooling adolescents. The PEP was developed with the help of literature review and expert opinion. A randomised control trial was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Intervention and

control groups had 73 parents each; the sample size was calculated using the equation by Pocock for experimental studies. The analysis was done using McNemar's test comparing the post intervention scores for intervention and control groups, according to the PPQ.

Results

The internal consistency of the PPQ and sub scales was found satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha > 0.7). The test re - test reliability also was satisfactory for PPQ, (Pearson's correlation Coefficient > 0.9 for selected items). The judgemental validity was established by an expert panel comprised psychiatrists, psychologists, community physicians, educationists and sociologists. The face, content and consensual validity were ensured by the expert panel.

According to PPQ, among 23.1% (95% CI: 21.2 - 25.0) of parents, parenting was good in overall parenting and 51.2% (CI: 48.8 - 53.9) , 23.7% (CI : 21.8 - 25.7) and 49.4% (47.1 - 57.1) of parents, parenting was good in 'connection', 'control' and 'respect' dimensions respectively.

The factors associated with overall satisfactory parenting were, being a female child (P<0.001), Type 1AB school (P<0.001), father educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.001), mother educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.001), father being in managerial or professional occupation (P<0.05), mother being in managerial or professional occupation (P<0.001), being both parents of same religion (P<0.001), living with both parents (P<0.05), being in a nuclear family (P<0.05), being a middle income family (P<0.05), father consuming alcohol less than 3-4 times /week (P<0.001), father a non smoker (P<0.00) and absence of Intimate Partner Violence (P<0.05).

The factors associated with satisfactory parenting in 'connection' dimension were, a child of age 13 &14 (P<0.001), Type 1AB school (P<0.001), father educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.05), mother educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.001), father being in managerial or professional occupation (P<0.05), both parents of same religion (P<0.001), living with both parents (P<0.05), father consuming alcohol less than 3-4 times /week (P<0.001) and father a non smoker (P<0.05).

The factors associated with satisfactory parenting in 'control' dimension were, Type 1AB school (P<0.001), mother's age more than 38 years (P<0.05), father educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.05), mother educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.001), father being in the support and clerical workers of occupation (P<0.05), mother being in managerial or professional occupation (P<0.05), both parents of same religion (P<0.05), being in a nuclear family (P<0.05), living with both parents (P<0.05), a middle income family (P<0.05), father consuming alcohol less than 3-4 times /week (P<0.001) and father a non smoker (P<0.05).

The factors associated with satisfactory parenting in 'respect' dimension were being a female child (P<0.001), Type 1AB school (P<0.001), father educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.05), mother educated above G.C.E (O/L) (P<0.05), father being in managerial or professional occupation (P<0.001), mother being in managerial or

professional occupation ($P < 0.001$), both parents are of same religion ($P < 0.001$), being in a nuclear family ($P < 0.05$), living with both parents ($P < 0.05$), being a middle income family ($P < 0.05$), father consuming alcohol less than 3-4 times /week ($P < 0.05$), father a non smoker ($P < 0.001$) and absence of Intimate Partner Violence ($P < 0.05$).

The intervention revealed a significant improvement in overall parenting and parenting in all three dimensions ($P < 0.05$) after 3 months from intervention.

Conclusions

The PPQ is a reliable and valid tool to assess parenting in selected dimensions ('connection', 'control' and 'respect') in Jaffna district. According to PPQ, among 23.1% of parents, parenting was good and among 52.2%, 23.7% and 49.4% of parents, parenting was good in 'connection', 'control' and 'respect' dimensions respectively.

The parenting patterns and the quality showed that improvement is needed. A number of factors such as sex and age of the child, educational level and occupation of parents, being in a nuclear family, both parents of same religion, substance use (alcohol and smoking) by fathers and Intimate Partner Violence were found associated with quality of parenting. As it a descriptive study design regression analysis was not done to eliminate the confounding effect of the associated factors. The intervention using PEP resulted in an improvement in parenting, in 3 month period following the intervention.

Recommendations

The PPQ can be validated for different cultures and different areas and can be used to describe the parenting and to assess the parenting interventions. Among the factors associated with parenting, modifiable factors such as substance use, intimate partner violence can be modified in future by interventions. Comparative analytical studies can be carried out and a regression analysis can be done to identify the associated factors more precisely. The PEP can be used for parenting interventions in future, all over the country with modifications according to the culture.

Key words: parenting, adolescent health, parenting interventions

